Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MOSCOW 05405 221629Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
----------085700 221635Z /72
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9389

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 05405

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: UR, US, PARM
SUBJECT: REPLY TO LETTER TO PRESIDENT ON RB/ER WEAPON

REF: (A) STATE 69554, (B) MOSCOW 4851

1. I AM CHAGRINED AT THE NEGATIVE RESPONSE (REFTEL A) TO MY RECOMMENDATION (REFTEL B) THAT I REPLY TO THE OPEN LETTER ON THE NEUTRON BOMB ADDRESSED TO PRESIDENT CARTER BY A GROUP OF SENIOR SOVIET ACADEMICIANS HEADED BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE ACADEMY OF SCIENCES, A.P. ALEKSANDROV. MY CHAGRIN IS DUE TO THE TEMERITY WHICH APPARENTLY UNDERLIES THE SUGGESTION OF USG SILENCE ON A MATTER WHICH IS A MAJOR PROPAGANDA EFFORT BY THE SOVIETS TO INTERFERE IN US AND NATO DEFENSE PLANNING.

2. THE FACT IS THAT THE SOVIET PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN CONTINUES UNABATED AND HAS BEEN MORE DIRECTLY AIMED IN RECENT WEEKS AT THE U.S. PRAVDA HAS ALREADY NOTED THAT THE ACADEMICIANS' LETTER REMAINS UNANSWERED AND WILL LIKELY ADD THIS POINT TO THEIR BARRAGE OF ARTICLES AND MEDIA PRONOUNCEMENTS ON THE ER/RB WEAPON AT REGULAR INTERVALS UNTIL THE LETTER EVOKES SOME KIND OF RESPONSE. THE STATUS OF ACADEMICIANS IN THE USSR IS SUCH THAT THEY CAN
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REASONABLY EXPECT AN OFFICIAL AND TIMELY RESPONSE FROM US ON THIS LETTER. WHILE THERE IS VIRTUALLY NO HOPE THAT MY REPLY WOULD BE PUBLISHED BY THE SOVIETS, I WOULD EXPECT SUBSTANTIAL PLAYBACK THROUGH THE AMERICAN PRESS CORPS IN MOSCOW AND THROUGH VOA.

3. I FULLY REALIZE (AND AM INFORMED) THAT THERE ARE SEN-

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SITIVE CONSULTATIONS IN PROGRESS WITH OUR ALLIES ON THIS ISSUE. HOWEVER, THERE WAS NOTHING IN THE SUBSTANCE OF MY PROPOSED REPLY WHICH TO MY KNOWLEDGE WOULD IN ANY WAY IMPINGE ON THOSE CONSULTATIONS. INDEED MY REMARKS WERE DRAWN FROM THE PUBLIC RECORD OF REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT IN WARSAW, AND AMBASSADOR FISHER IN GENEVA. IN THE MEANWHILE GENERAL HAIG HAS MADE A MAJOR PUBLIC PRONOUNCEMENT ON THE SUBJECT IN A WASHINGTON PRESS CONFERENCE. I FAIL TO SEE HOW MY REPLY COULD HAVE MORE OF AN EFFECT ON OUR CONSULTATIONS THAN THESE STATEMENTS.

4. I AM NOT, AS YOU KNOW, ONE WHO WOULD INSIST THAT WE ANSWER EVERY PIECE OF SOVIET PROPAGANDA SENT TO THE PRESIDENT, BUT IN THIS CASE I STRONGLY BELIEVE THAT WE SHOULD REPLY TO THE ACADEMICIANS AND REPLY PROMPTLY. I AM EQUALLY PERSUADED THAT THE REPLY SHOULD BE MADE HERE IN MOSCOW, NOT IN WASHINGTON, AND MOST CERTAINLY NOT BY THE WHITE HOUSE OR THE PRESIDENT.

5. I WOULD APPRECIATE A RECONSIDERATION OF STATE 69554 AND AUTHORIZATION TO REPLY. TOON

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